

Canberra Region Tourism Leaders Forum Chair's Report: 1 July 2020 – 30 June 2021

The **Canberra Region Tourism Leaders Forum** is the Canberra Region's peak tourism body. Our Board comprises the heads of associations and organisations representing the tourism and wider industry sectors in the ACT and Canberra Region, all focussed on growing the visitor economy in the ACT and Southern NSW.

Our 2020-2021 Board Membership.

Member	Position
Richie Alan	Representing the Traditional Owners
Sally Barnes	CEO National Capital Authority
Anthony Brierley	General Manager Australian Hotels Association ACT
Phil Brown	CEO Capital Football representing sporting associations
Ritu Clementi	Head, Global Client Group, Asia Pacific Region Amex
Rachael Coghlan	Head Parliament House Cultural Strategy & Experience representing Arts Events
Sean Haylan	General Manager Destination Southern NSW
Jonathan Kobus	Director Visit Canberra
Noel Langdon	Tourism Australia Cultural Signature Series and Sec. CRTLF
David Marshall	Chair Canberra Region Tourism Leaders Forum
Michael Matthews	CEO Canberra Convention Bureau
Michelle Park	Restaurant entrepreneur and communications expert
Mark Sarah	President National Capital Attractions Association
Graeme Shaw	Owner Shaw Vineyard Estate representing Canberra Wines
Gary Stewart	General Manager Canberra Centre
Rob Stefanic	Secretary Parliamentary Services Parliament House & Chair National Capital Education Tourism Project
Michael Thomson	Head of Aviation Canberra Airport
Marg Wade	Canberra Small Tour Operators Collective & ATEC Chair
Brian Weir	Lecturer, UC Tourism Program, representing education sector
Stephen Wood	General Manager National Convention Centre

As a Board the Tourism Leaders Forum hosted a number of our Canberra Region Tourism Advisory Forums at the National Convention Centre Canberra. These Forums brought all sections of the industry together and provided a platform for some of our country's most influential leaders to brief our industry on all matters relating to how we should cope and survive this tumultuous time.

July 2020-June 2021 Meeting Dates:

Canberra Region Tourism Advisory Forums dates

These Forums were all held face-to-face at the National Convention Centre
2020

- Thursday 9 July
- Thursday 6 August
- Wednesday 9 September
- Wednesday 7 October
- Wednesday 4 November
- Monday 7 December

2021

- Thursday 4 February
- Tuesday 2 March
- Tuesday 6 April
- Monday 3 May
- Tuesday 1 June

Canberra Region Tourism Leaders Forums Dates:

2020

- Thursday 9 July
- Thursday 6 August
- Wednesday 9 September
- Wednesday 7 October
- Wednesday 4 November
- Monday 7 December

2021

- Tuesday 12 January
- Thursday 4 February
- Tuesday 2 March
- Tuesday 6 April
- Monday 3 May
- Tuesday 1 June

Many of our Canberra Region Tourism Leaders Forum Board meetings were attended by Kareena Arthy, Deputy Director-General, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, along with Kate Starick, Executive Group Manager, Economic Development Division, CMTEDD and Morgan Campbell Senior Director, Economic Recovery and Strategic Policy.

The Board very much appreciated the opportunity to engage directly with three key senior executives within the ACT Government and their attendance contributed significantly to our Board's deliberations.

Canberra Region Tourism Advisory Forum Guest Speakers 2020/2021

- Andrew Barr MLA: ACT Chief Minister and Minister for Tourism
- Dr Kerry Coleman: ACT Chief Health Officer
- Jonathan Kobus: Director Visit Canberra
- Professor Peter Collignon AM: Infectious Diseases Physician
- Deputy Commissioner: Neil Gaughan APM, Chief Police Officer ACT
- Phillipa Harrison: Managing Director Tourism Australia
- Emma Watts: NSW Cross Border Ass. Commissioner
- Michael Thomson: Head of Aviation Canberra Airport
- Matt Anderson PSM: Director Australian War Memorial
- Shane Rattenbury: ACT MLA, Greens Leader and Member for Kurrajong
- Malcolm Snow: Chief Executive City Renewal Authority
- His Excellency Kwok Fook Seng, High Commissioner of Singapore
- Dr Mat Trinca AM: Director National Museum of Australia
- Tara Cheyne: ACT MLA, Minister for Business and Better Regulation, Assistant Minister for Economic Development and Minister for the Arts
- Simon Westaway: Executive Director Australian Tourism Industry Council
- Professor Paddy Nixon: Vice Chancellor and President Uni of Canberra
- Assoc Prof. Sanjaya Senanayaka: Professor of Medicine at the ANU and Infectious Disease Expert and Physician
- Tom von Oertzen, Managing Director Boston Consulting Group
- Margy Osmond Chief Executive Tourism and Transport Forum
- Hon John Sharp: Deputy Chair Rex Airlines
- Professor Ian Anderson Deputy Vice-Chancellor ANU
- John Hart OAM: Executive Chair Australian Chamber – Tourism and Board Member Tourism Australia
- Chelle Murphy: Austrade Chief Economist
- Sally Barnes: Chief Executive National Capital Authority

These speakers, all leaders and experts in the respective areas of responsibility, gave their time freely to address our Forums on a variety of pertinent topics.

These meetings attracted up to 150 industry leaders each month, and the Canberra Region Tourism Advisory Forum was the only regular gathering of its type in Australia to each month bring together the sectors driving the visitor economy during this Covid-19 Pandemic

I would like to thank the National Convention Centre General Manager Stephen Wood and his team, including Encore, for hosting these Forums during what was a very difficult year for the Centre. I would also sincerely thank Visit Canberra and Jonathan Kobus for sponsoring these Forums.

Other Activities

Covid and Liaison with the ACT Government

- Members of the Tourism Leaders Forum met with Chief Minister Andrew Barr and also frequently with the Chief Minister's Tourism Advisors over a number of issues
- The Tourism Leaders Forum engaged frequently with the Deputy Director General of the ACT Economic Development Directorate, Kareena Arthy and her executive team on many issues relating to the management of the Covid-19 pandemic. Topics covered included everything from the impact on our respective sectors of restrictions imposed by the Chief Health Officer to the ACT Government's Business Support Packages, QR Codes and the CBR Voucher initiative
- Members of the Forum briefed the ACT Greens Party Room on the state of the industry as part of a series of briefings to all ACT MLA's
- A roundtable with 30 industry representatives was arranged with the new Minister for Business and Regulatory Reform Tara Cheyne. As a result a 16 page report was prepared by the Leaders Forum for Minister Cheyne as part of the industry consultation the Directorate was undertaking on her behalf.
- ACT budget deliberations and discussions were held with a cross section of ACT Directorates prior to the 2021 ACT Budget being delivered
- Discussions were held with Events ACT on how the industry could support their team during Covid restrictions and also on their appointment of a consultancy to develop an events strategy for the ACT
- Support for the cancelled National Folk Festival, the future of Floriade and Enlighten and other scheduled events during Covid were discussed
- Noel Langdon represented the Tourism Leaders Forum on the ACT Planning Directorate's review of the Territory Plan
- The Government's communication to the industry was enhanced as a result of feedback from Tourism Leaders Forum members
- There were several discussion surrounding the impact of Covid on the visitor economy including meetings with Destination Southern NSW focussing on the free flow of visitors across our respective borders. Topics also explored with several agencies and industry operators were workforce shortages, international university students return to the ACT, vaccine rollouts, the impact on the aviation industry, the dilemma faced by the business events sector and school excursions ceasing to the national capital. A priority was also having public servants returning to the workplace.

Other discussions with industry sectors

- The significant impact on the tourism industry overall particularly attractions, accommodation and the hospitality sectors were foremost in the minds of the Tourism Leaders Forum. These sectors along with the arts community and sporting associations were dramatically impacted by Covid-19
- Conversations on the ACT night time economy began with the aim of opening the city to far more activation from 6.00pm of an evening
- Funding for sports generally was the subject of considerable discussion again this year, particularly the Kanga Cup that drew thousands of competitors and visitors to the ACT in the past, but was cancelled this year, a casualty of Covid-19 restrictions.
- The enticing of the Big Bash League and other national sports fixtures to Canberra was a priority for the ACT
- General Manager of the Arboretum and Stromlo Forest Park Scott Saddler conducted a tour for the Board of Stromlo Forest Park
- Meetings were held with Malcolm Snow CEO of the City Renewal Authority on their Precinct Renewal Programs
- Discussions were held with Brand Canberra Board members and others on the CBR Brand and its evolution
- International Engagement Commissioner Brendan Smyth liaised with the Leaders Forum on his dealings with tourism-related businesses struggling to cope with the downturn in visitor numbers, in his capacity as Commercial Tenancy Mediator (Business Commissioner) to assist commercial landlords and tenants to negotiate mutually agreeable outcomes

Federal Government and National Issues

- Meetings were held regularly with the Chief Executive of the National Capital Authority Sally Barnes. Many matters were discussed surrounding the Parliamentary Precinct and its importance to the tourism sector, including the new event guidelines the NCA had developed
- Attended meetings in support of the National Museum of Australia's initiative in establishing the 'Culture Loop' bus shuttle service supported by many of the National Attractions which sadly closed late last year after a 12 month trial
- Discussions were held with the Department of Communications relating to the Morton Report and the National Capital Education Tourism Project, and with the Federal Department of Communications re school visits to the ACT
- Discussions were held with Tourism Industry Council Executive Director Simon Westaway, Australian Chamber Tourism Chair John Hart, and Tourism and Transport Forum's CEO Margie Osmond.
- Johnathan Kobus, Michael Thomson and David Marshall participated in on-line 'Team Meetings' initiated by Australian Chamber Tourism on the proposed 'travel bubble' between Wellington and Canberra
- Meetings were held with several National Institution Directors

ACT industry sector liaison and issues addressed

- Discussions were initiated on the problems facing visitors to our National Institutions, allowing only limited numbers of visitors at a time due to density limits, and the logistics of ticketed timed entry
- Meetings were held to explore the financial challenges restaurants and coffee shops faced due to the 4sqm rule and seating limitations and also with hotels who were dramatically impacted by travel restrictions and thus low occupancy levels
- Testing of new social distancing technology was trialled at the Canberra Region Tourism Advisory Forums by the Canberra Convention Bureau
- Meetings were held with the Canberra Business Chamber on tourism and related business issues as part of the Tourism Leaders Forum's Kindred Organisation membership of the Chamber
- Steve Wood and then David Marshall represented the Tourism Leaders Forum, on behalf of the Canberra Business Chamber, on the Australian Chamber's National Tourism Board
- Through an initiative of the AHA ACT, the Tourism Leaders Forum joined forces to conduct pre-election forums in each ACT electorate in September and October 2020, inviting local candidates to present their ideas and to directly hear the plight of ACT tourism and hospitality operators.
- Gary Watson briefed the Tourism Leaders Forum Board on the school excursion market and impact of the discontinuation of interstate school visits to the ACT

The Canberra Region Focus

Members of the CRTLF attended many industry functions, launches and openings during the year, but in particular:

- SKAL monthly industry lunches
- The Chief Minister's State of the Territory address
- Tour Operators Alliance meetings initiated by Marg Wade
- Mini Tourism Expo meetings at King O'Malley's arranged by Dot Barclay and Marg Wade

Media Activity

Since 1 July 2020, media coverage included 117 interviews on a variety of tourism related issues on Radio 2CC, ABC Radio, MixFM and 104.7, and articles in the Canberra Times and the Riot ACT, and on ABC and WIN Television

Other matters

The Canberra Region Tourism Leader Forum is developing a website to promote our activities, and it will also enable our 500 plus invited members being able to register online for the Canberra Region Tourism Advisory Forums. This will be completed in early 2022

Thank you to the 20 Board members of the Canberra Region Tourism Leaders Forum for their commitment to our industry during the past 12 months. All members provide their time freely to support the growth of the visitor economy in the ACT and the wider Canberra Region.

I would again acknowledge Visit Canberra in the support they generously provide throughout the year in hosting the Canberra Region Tourism Advisory Forums.

Finally, to our wonderful supporting partners: The University of Canberra, Canberra Park, the Canberra Centre, Parbery Consulting, SPA Accounting, the National Convention Centre and Encore. Without their support we would not be able to achieve what we have during a most challenging year.

Dr David Marshall AM

**Chair Canberra Region Tourism Leaders Forum
Chair Canberra Region Tourism Advisory Forum**

30 June 2021